The Commissioner's REPORT

New Jersey Transportation Highlights

Governor James E. McGreevey | **March 2004** | **Commissioner Jack Lettiere**

NJDOT proposes $2.58 billion Capital Program for FY 2005

In support of Governor James E. McGreevey's ongoing commitment to New Jersey's transportation system, NJDOT has proposed a $2.58 billion capital program for FY2005 that will put more than $900 million in construction work on the street over the next two years.

This strong program will focus on repairing roads and bridges, improving safety and relieving congestion on our state's roadways. It will also maintain and expand public transportation options.

Our proposal will allow the NJDOT to proceed with major rehabilitations of our state's infrastructure, with a special emphasis on bridges, and fund a strong Local Aid program that will provide direct property tax relief to counties and municipalities.

Governor McGreevey inaugurates River LINE light rail service

Governor McGreevey headed the list of officials who inaugurated the new River LINE light rail service at its stops between downtown Trenton and the Camden waterfront on March 13. This historic opportunity for southern New Jersey will provide rail access to thousands of citizens and spur the economic revitalization of this entire corridor.

The $1.10 fare offers stops in 12 other communities as well and easy connections to area public transportation. River LINE riders in Trenton can connect to Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT's Northeast Corridor Line to Newark Penn Station, Newark Liberty International Airport, New York Penn Station and stations in between.

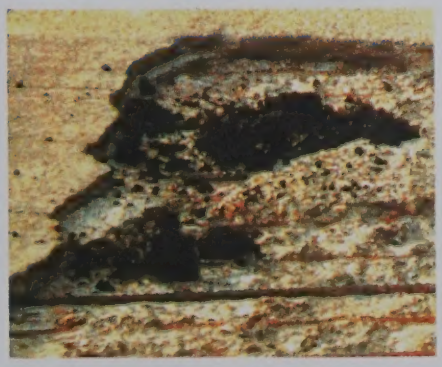
At the Camden end, River LINE riders can get off at the Entertainment Center, the Aquarium and the Walter Rand Transportation Center where they can make connections to NJ TRANSIT buses, PATCO, Lindenwold and the Atlantic City Rail Line.

In addition, NJ TRANSIT's Capital Connection buses travel between the Trenton Rail Station, Downtown Trenton and the State House. BurLink operates shuttle bus service from several Burlington County stations along the River LINE and the South Jersey Transportation Authority runs shuttle buses and vans to worksites in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties.

Schedules and further information are available online at www.RiverLINE.com.

Pothole-fixing campaign starts early

The winter of 2003-2004 has been especially rough on New Jersey's roadways. Recognizing this problem, we have jump-started our annual effort to fill potholes all over the state. In mid-February, Governor James E. McGreevey and I announced an aggressive $1.[illegible]lion roadway repair program to address damage caused by severe winter temperatures.



The NJDOT initiated work, including weekend shifts, on highways that have been damaged by the recent onslaught of winter storms. We offer the public our 800-POTHOLE number and an online form at www.njdot.nj.gov to report locations of potholes on state highways. Over the next several months, the NJDOT will utilize 100 road crews, six special "pothole killer" trucks and paving contracts to fulfill this commitment.

New Jersey roads are getting safer

Governor McGreevey's safety initiatives are bearing results. Statistics show that New Jersey's roads are becoming safer and less congested: the number of pedestrians killed on New Jersey's roads dropped by 20 percent last year and overall highway deaths followed this trend by declining as well.

Over the past year and a half, the NJDOT has advanced a number of the Governor's initiatives designed to improve safety. The landmark **Safe Corridors** program aggressively addresses safety on New Jersey's roads with the highest accident rates. In addition, the **#77** program urges motorists to report aggressive drivers.

NJDOT also continues to invest in transportation improvements like new sidewalks, better intersections, new traffic signals and better signs, all of which protect motorists and pedestrians. As part of his ongoing efforts to keep New Jersey's children safe and secure, Governor McGreevey recently announced the award of $13 million in grants, $6 million through NJDOT's **Safe Streets to Schools** program and $7 million to build bike paths throughout New Jersey.

ESP celebrates a decade of service

NJDOT's Emergency Service Patrol (ESP) is celebrating its tenth year of operation. The ESP has made more than 280,000 motorist assists since its inception in 1994 and will patrol 340 miles of state highways by the end of this year. This motorist was helped on I-195 earlier this month. More than 29 percent of ESP assists are for flat tires.

Investments in congestion relief begin to pay off

New Jersey drivers now have shorter commutes and reduced congestion. An annual study by the U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that the average commuting time in New Jersey is down from 2001, the last year in which statistics were available. While New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the country and efforts to relieve congestion must continue, this news is encouraging.

NJDOT is targeting transportation capital investments that reduce congestion. For example, a few weeks ago, we broke ground on the $20.5 million rehabilitation of the Route 1/9 bridge over the Rahway River. The project is part of an overall $270 million investment to improve the Route 1 Corridor from I-287 in Middlesex County to this bridge.

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